BELMONT MILL, WASTE ROCK PILE
(Nevada Belmont Mill)
Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
Approximately 7 miles south of U.S. Route 50 on USDA Forest Service Road No. 623
Ely vicinity
White Pine County
Nevada

HAER NV-46-E
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

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BELMONT MILL,
WASTE ROCK PILE

HAER No. NV-46-E

Location: Approximately 7 miles south of U.S. Route 50 on USDA Forest Service Road No. 623, Ely vicinity, White Pine County, Nevada.
U.S. Geological Survey, Seligman Canyon, Nevada, 7.5 Quadrangle (1992), Township 16 North, Range 57 East, Section 1.
UTM Zone 11, Easting 2060930.01, Northing 14266987.95 (center of pile) (NAD 83).
Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest Feature No. F18.

Significance: The Tonopah Belmont Development Company (TBDC) was one of the most important companies created during Nevada's early twentieth-century mining boom. As ore deposits in its central Nevada mines were depleted, the company sought new claims to resurrect its fortunes. In 1926 TBDC built the Belmont Mill near Hamilton to process lead and silver ore from its recently acquired claims in the White Pine mining district of eastern Nevada. The small pilot mill employed the most recent advances in table concentration and flotation mineral processing techniques, and the company erected numerous other buildings and structures to support the mining and milling work. The site was largely abandoned by TBDC after a few years, but later owners used the mill and associated structures for smaller operations. The waste rock pile may have been used during both periods. Today, although most of the equipment has been removed, the Belmont Mill site is one of the only intact early twentieth-century mill complexes in eastern Nevada. As such, it is a tangible reminder of the decline and failure of a once-powerful company and, thereby, of the boom and bust cycle so common in the mining industry. The subsequent modification and reuse of the mill for small-scale operations typifies the ceaseless hum of optimism that sustains the mining industry.

Description: The waste rock (or tailings) pile is located about 72' northeast of the mill (HAER No. NV-46-A), across the access road that leads up the small drainage to the north. A second branch of the access road circumscribes the waste rock pile on its north side. The pile is V-shaped, with the base of the V closest to the mill and two lobes extending further northeast. The pile measures about 128' long by 114' at its widest point and is about 10' tall, of similar elevation to Level 6 of the mill. Wood members mark the remains of short rail lines that originally extended to the end of each lobe.

History: See the Narrative Overview in HAER No. NV-46 for a broad contextual history.

The history of the waste rock pile is unclear. Ca. 1940 photographs (see Figures 3-5 in HAER No. NV-46) confirm that tailings deposition occurred in numerous locations throughout the milling process, including just outside each doorway on the south side of the mill (apparently by hand or wheelbarrow), into the canyon bottom via tails launders

to the east of the mill (visible in Figure 4 but no longer present), and also via rail to the waste rock pile. There is no evidence of a tailings pond but, if present, it would have been located in the canyon bottom, perhaps on the opposite side of the main road. (It's more likely that wet tailings were simply deposited in the dry streambed, standard practice for the time.)

The mill obscures the location of the waste rock pile in ca. 1940 photographs but the pile does appear in a 1980 photograph (see Figure 7 in HAER No. NV-46). A short rail line led from the north door on Level 6 of the mill, across the flat yard between the power house (NV-46-B) and the tool shed and lumber rack (NV-46-F), over the access road via a short trestle, and to the end of the west lobe. At that time the trestle across the road had partially collapsed and the rail line was in poor repair. Wooden remnants on the east lobe indicate that a rail line originally ran across the top of it and that the west lobe was started after the toe of the east lobe had nearly reached the road to the north. Today the waste rock pile remains in place but only a few wooden members mark the location of the rail lines across both lobes.

Sources: See HAER No. NV-46.

Historian: Anne Oliver, Principal, Oliver Conservation Group. Fieldwork for the project was conducted in the fall of 2010. Project documentation was accepted by HABS/HAER in 2011.

Project Information: See HAER No. NV-46 for complete details. In summary, this project was completed under a contract between the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest and a consulting team under the direction of ajc architects (Salt Lake City, Utah), in consultation with the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office. The project historian was Anne Oliver, historic preservation consultant with Oliver Conservation Group. Matt Wallace, intern architect with ajc architects, was responsible for the architectural measured drawings and completed all fieldwork and final drawings with the assistance of Oliver Smith Callis, draftsman. The photography was produced by Steve Tregeagle Photography under the direction of Steve Tregeagle and with the assistance of Heath Brown.